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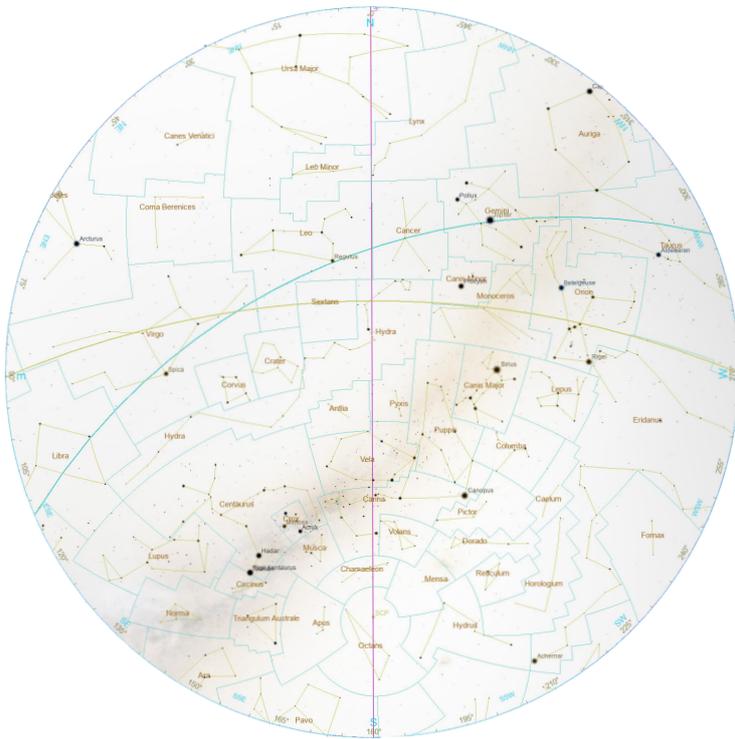
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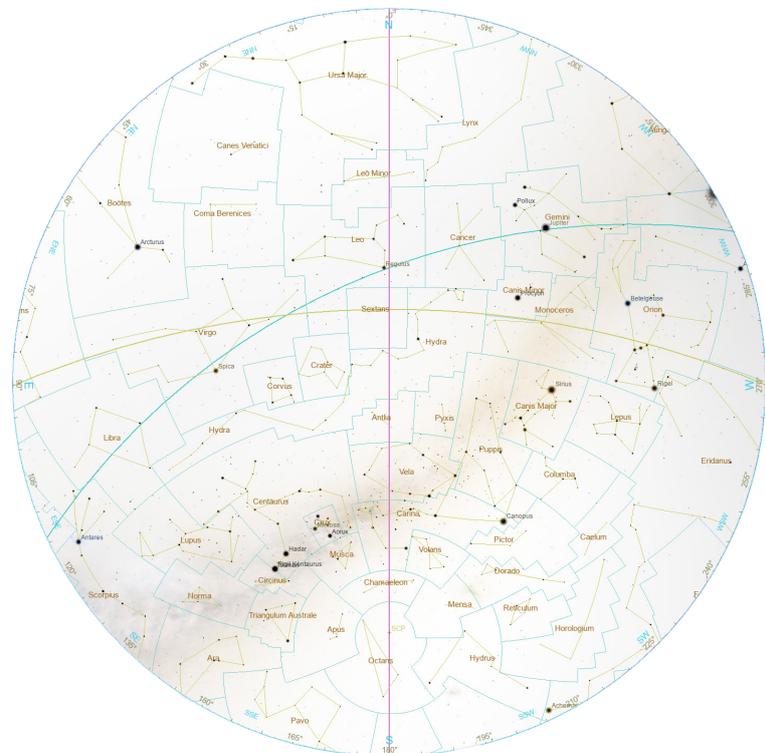
110 Robert Mugave Ave, Windhoek

## Astro News April 2026

2026 by Lutz von Dewitz for the Namibia Scientific Society

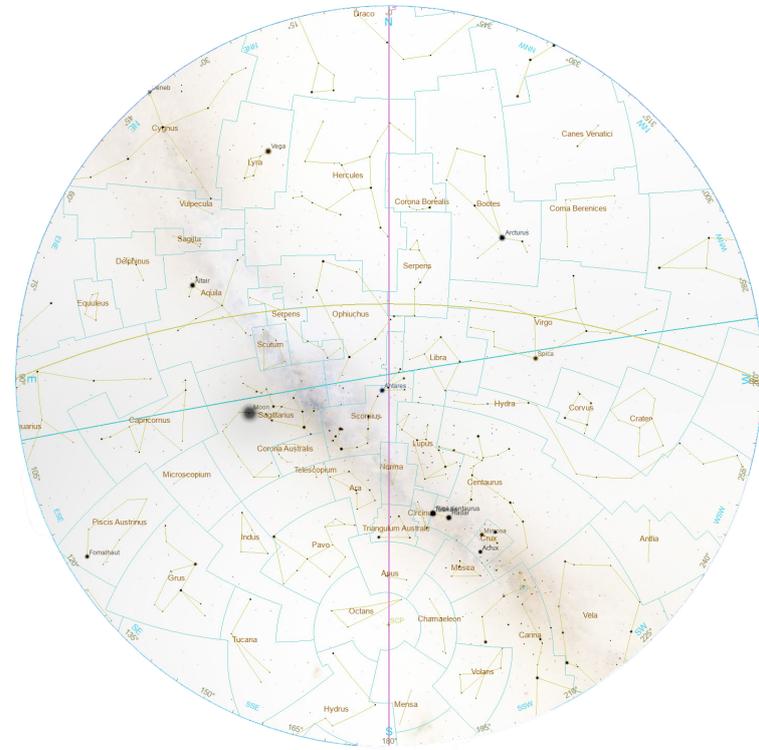


Skychart at Windhoek on 10 April 2026  
at 21h00 (GMT + 2h Central African Time)

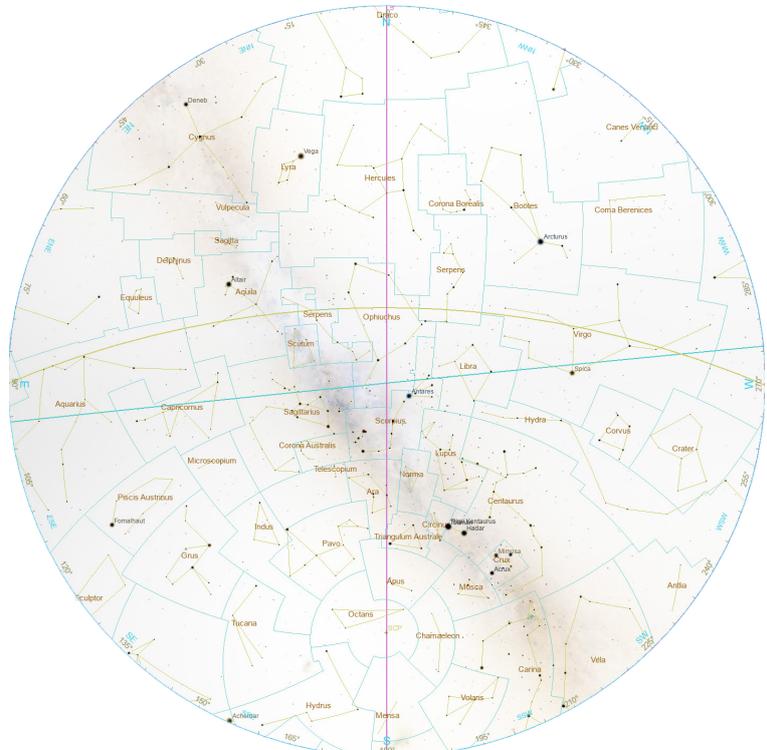


Skychart at Windhoek on 20 April 2026  
at 21h00 (GMT + 2h Central African Time)

Ecliptic Line – Celestial Equator – Meridian – Constellation Borders / SCP = Southern Celestial Pole – Z = Zenith



Skychart at Windhoek on 10 April 2026 at 04h00 (GMT + 2h Central African Time)



Skychart at Windhoek on 20 April 2026 at 04h00 (GMT + 2h Central African Time)

Ecliptic Line – Celestial Equator – Meridian – Constellation Borders / SCP = Southern Celestial Pole – Z = Zenith

### Moon Phases

- 03 April 2026 - Full Moon
- 11 April 2026 - Last Quarter
- 19 April 2026 - New Moon
- 25 April 2026 - First Quarter

### Solar System

Planet Visibility	Rise	Culm.	Set
Mercury	05:49	12:01	18:13
Venus	08:00	13:58	19:55
Mars	05:47	12:04	18:22
Jupiter	15:00	20:22	01:44
Saturn	07:30	13:33	19:37

*Planets in gray are not visible*

**Above Times accurate for 15 April 2026**

**Mercury** recently passed behind the Sun at superior solar conjunction. From Windhoek, it is not readily observable since it is very close to the Sun, at a separation of only 14° from it.

**Venus** recently passed behind the Sun at superior solar conjunction. From Namibia, it is not observable – it will reach its highest point in the sky during daytime and is no higher than 7° above the horizon at dusk.

**Aprs** will soon pass behind the Sun at solar conjunction. From Namibia, it is not observable.

**Jupiter** is currently an early evening object. From Namibia, it is visible in the evening sky, becoming accessible around 19:20, 42° above your northern horizon. It will then reach its highest point in the sky at 20:20, 44° above your northern horizon. It will continue to be observable until around 01:00, when it sinks below 7° above your north-western horizon.

**Saturn** will soon pass behind the Sun at solar conjunction. From Namibia, it is not readily observable since it is very close to the Sun, at a separation of only 9° from it.

## Other Occurrences

C/2026 A1 (MAPS), a Kreutz sungrazer comet, was discovered on January 13, 2026, at the AMACS1 Observatory in the Atacama Desert. On April 4, 2026, it will pass about 162,000 km from the Sun's surface (perihelion). When the comet is near the Sun, forward scattering of light could make it noticeably brighter, though it may be difficult to observe because of the Sun's glare. Its actual brightness remains uncertain, as it depends on whether the comet survives its close approach to perihelion.

The Kreutz sungrazers are a group of comets that pass extremely close to the Sun at perihelion and travel up to 100 times farther than Earth's distance from the Sun at aphelion. Thought to be fragments of a single comet that broke apart centuries ago, they were identified as related by astronomer Heinrich Kreutz. These comets journey from the Solar System's outer regions to near the Sun before returning outward.

The Comet C/2026 A1 (MAPS) might be visible in the evening hours shortly after sunset on 1 April and then from 8 April in the west in the Constellation of Pisces.

Comet C/2025 R3 (PanSTARRS) may be visible in the north-east morning sky from 11 April in Pegasus. This hyperbolic Oort cloud comet will reach perihelion (closest point to the sun) on 19 April 2026, possibly brightening to magnitude +3. It was first detected by the PanSTARRS survey using the 1.8-m telescope at Haleakala, Hawaii, with an apparent magnitude of 20. On 11 September, it was 3.60 AU from the Sun.

On April 7, 2026, the comet will be 33 degrees from the Sun. At perihelion on April 19, it will be 0.499 AU away, just 20 degrees from the Sun. Its brightness may increase as it passes between the Sun and Earth, reaching solar conjunction on April 25 at 3.5 degrees from the Sun. The closest approach to Earth will be 0.489 AU on April 26.

Afterwards, its outbound trajectory indicates it will leave the Solar System.

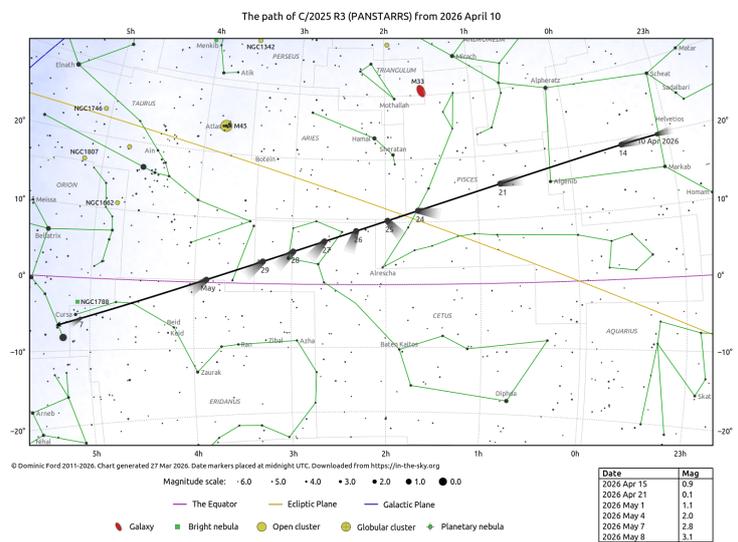
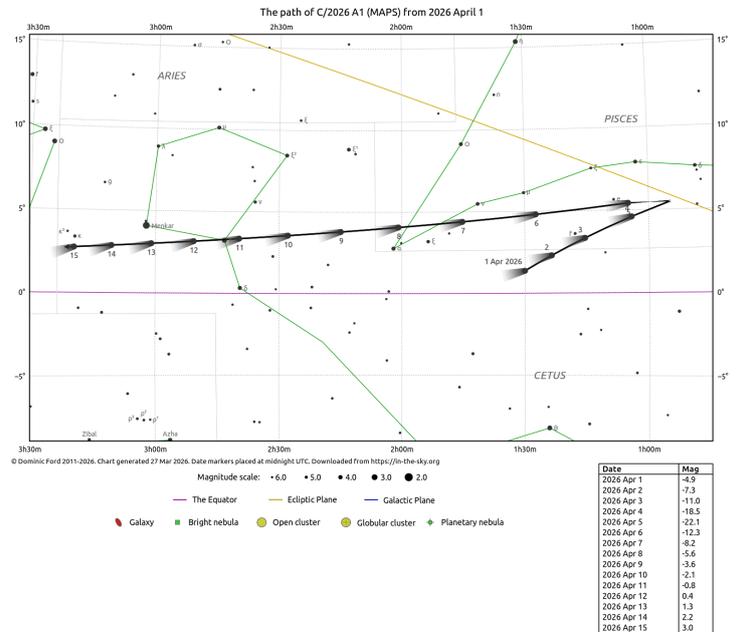
## Constellation of the Month

### Carina: The Keel of the Ship

#### Compiled by Lutz von Dewitz

Carina is a prominent constellation that graces the southern sky. Its name comes from the Latin word for a ship's keel, which forms the structural backbone of a vessel. Historically, Carina was not a standalone constellation but instead formed part of a much larger constellation known as Argo Navis, or the Ship Argo.

Over time, astronomers found the vast size and complexity of Argo Navis to be unwieldy. As a result, this immense constellation was eventually divided into three separate



parts, each representing a section of the mythical ship. Carina represents the keel, while Puppis symbolises the stern, and Vela depicts the sail. This division has allowed for more manageable observation and study of these regions within the night sky.

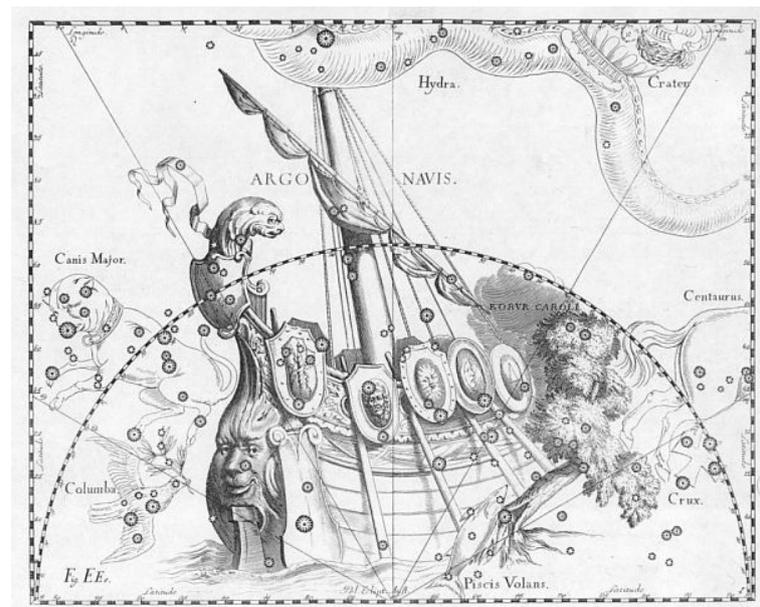
Carina ranks as the 34th largest constellation in the night sky, covering a total area of 494 square degrees. Its location is in the second quadrant of the southern hemisphere, commonly abbreviated as SQ2. Observers can spot Carina at latitudes ranging from +20° down to -90°, making it visible across a wide swathe of the southern sky.

The neighbouring constellations that border Carina are

Centaurus, Chamaeleon, Musca, Pictor, Puppis, Vela, and Volans. These adjacent constellations help define the boundaries of Carina and situate it as a central feature within the southern celestial sphere.

### The History and Division of Argo Navis

Argo Navis was originally catalogued in the 2nd century CE by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy. This vast constellation represented the mythical ship Argo, but its size and complexity made it difficult to manage as one entity. In the 18th century, the French astronomer Nicolas Louis de Lacaille undertook the task of dividing Argo Navis into three distinct constellations: Carina, representing the keel; Puppis, the stern; and Vela, the sail. This division allowed for easier identification and study of these regions of the sky. The three separate constellations—Carina, Puppis, and Vela—were officially recognised in the early 20th century. At this time, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) defined the borders of constellations on the celestial sphere, thus formalising their inclusion in the list of modern constellations.



### Notable Stars and Deep Sky Objects in Carina

Within the constellation of Carina lies Canopus, the second-brightest star visible in the night sky. Alongside Canopus, Carina is also home to several other remarkable and luminous stars, including Eta Carinae. Eta Carinae is particularly noteworthy, as it is surrounded by the renowned Carina Nebula, a striking feature for observers and astronomers alike. The Eta Carinae Nebula is a vast nebula encircling Eta Carina. It is one of the brightest and largest diffuse nebulae, about four times bigger than the Orion Nebula in Orion.

Carina boasts a variety of famed deep sky objects. Among these are the Theta Carinae Cluster, commonly referred to as the Southern Pleiades, and the Wishing Well Cluster. The constellation also includes the Southern Beehive Cluster

(NGC 2516), as well as the open cluster NGC 3603. Another prominent nebula within Carina is the Statue of Liberty Nebula, designated NGC 3576. These clusters and nebulae contribute to Carina's reputation as a rich and visually spectacular region of the southern sky.

Many of Carina's notable stars and deep sky objects are visible to the naked eye and offer a stunning view through 10x50 binoculars, making them a truly rewarding sight for any sky watcher.

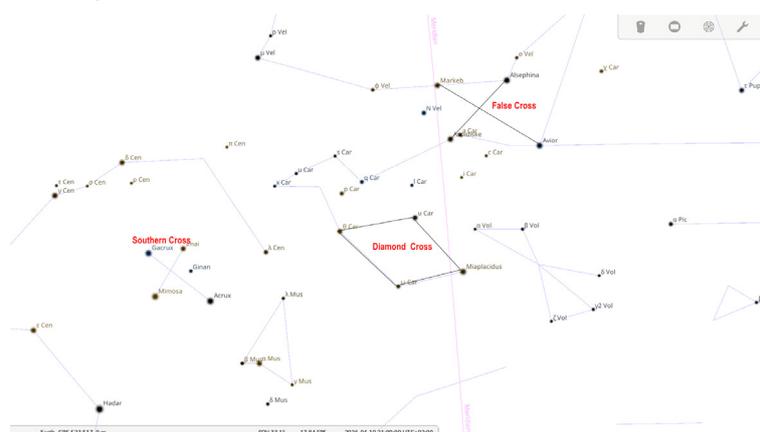
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### Compiled by Lutz von Dewitz

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